

**STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT • 2ND DISTRICT**

# Scott Press Release

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## **LEGISLATIVE BUILD 2008 HAS LAWMAKERS 'WORKING' IN THEIR DISTRICTS**

LANSING -- On Tues., Aug. 19, legislators from across the state will pound hammers, wield paint brushes or plant trees as part of Legislative Build 2008 Celebration Day. The event is the culmination of a summer-long partnership between legislators and an array of community groups statewide who invited legislators to work with them on a neighborhood improvement project in or near their district this summer.

"We invited the Michigan Legislature to take part in Legislative Build 2008 and we're proud to say 80 percent signed up," says Ken Bensen, CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Michigan, one of the groups partnering in the project. "Our goal is to expose legislators to the work of organizations striving on a local level to provide affordable housing and community improvements while encouraging economic development," added Bensen.

To take part in the 'Build,' legislators committed to work four hours or more on a community improvement project in or near their district. Nearly 50 organizations hosted work days for legislators throughout the summer. Projects ranged from rehabbing a downtown apartment complex with a housing commission, to planting trees at a neighborhood park with a community economic development group. Although projects took place all summer long, organizers selected Aug. 19 as the day to celebrate the good work being done all summer long, according to Bensen.

"Legislative Build 2008 is a bi-partisan effort that has both sides of the aisle working side by side," notes Sen. Martha G. Scott, (D-Highland Park), who co-chaired the event along with Sen. Mark Jansen (R-Grand Rapids), Rep. Steve Tobocman, (D-Detroit) and Rep. John Proos (R-St. Joseph). For her part in the project, Sen. Scott worked on the rehab of a house in Highland Park with Moving in New Directions.

Sen. Mark Jansen, another co-chair, says he was impressed by the spirit of collaboration in Legislative Build 2008. "This project truly celebrates partnerships, both across the aisle and among the many organizations and associations and individuals," he said. "What a great example of collaboration effecting change." On Aug. 19, Sen. Jansen will be in Grand Rapids putting up vinyl siding on the first Habitat for Humanity condominium project to be built in Michigan.

Legislative Build 2008 is an opportunity to showcase the boundless opportunities for

volunteerism, notes Rep. John Proos. "This project is not just a learning experience, it's a chance to get in touch with the many volunteer opportunities that exist helping local communities and Michigan families," says Rep. Proos. On Aug. 21, he will be helping construct a home in a subdivision being developed by Harbor Habitat for Humanity in Benton Harbor.

"Everyone deserves a decent, safe place to live," Rep. Steve Tobocman said. "That's why the Legislative Build involves all of us, Democrats, Republicans, Senate and House members. By participating in our home districts we can be part of a true statewide effort to provide housing and spur economic development." For his part in the build, Rep. Tobocman helped in the construction of a two-story house with Habitat for Humanity of Detroit on Aug. 8.

"In order to attract jobs to our state, Michigan needs vibrant neighborhoods and downtowns" says Angie Gaabo, of Community Economic Development Association of Michigan, one of the sponsoring groups for Legislative Build. "Legislative Build is a way for legislators to see the good work being done by community groups and organizations right in their own districts and the economic impact it's having on the local communities."

The seven groups sponsoring Legislative Build 2008 are Community Development Advocates of Detroit, (CDAD) Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), Habitat for Humanity of Michigan, Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, Michigan Community Action Agency Association, Michigan Association of Home Builders and Michigan Housing Council. For more information on Legislative Build 2008, visit: [www.milegislativebuild.com](http://www.milegislativebuild.com)

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